

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6459

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 2, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to membership on city disability boards.

**Brief Description:** Addressing membership on city disability boards.

**Sponsors:** Senators Conway, Schoesler and Hobbs.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/31/12, 2/02/12 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Chase and Nelson.

**Staff:** Karen Epps (786-7424)

**Background:** The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System Plan 1 (LEOFF 1) provides retirement and disability benefits to law enforcement officers and fire fighters who entered eligible employment between 1969 and 1977. Since 1977 eligible law enforcement officers and fire fighters have entered LEOFF 2.

Decisions on eligibility for LEOFF 1 disability and medical benefits are made by city and county LEOFF 1 disability boards. Disability benefits may be granted by LEOFF 1 disability boards to members in LEOFF 1 for both duty- and non duty-related causes. In addition to disability benefits, LEOFF 1 is unique among state retirement system benefits in that retiree benefits include coverage for all necessary medical services.

Each city with a population of 20,000 or more has a LEOFF 1 disability board and each county also has a disability board, and these county boards have jurisdiction over LEOFF 1 members who are not employed in a city that has its own disability board. The LEOFF 1 disability boards have five members. The LEOFF 1 disability boards also have one member of the public appointed by the other members of the disability board, one active or retired fire

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fighter member representing fire fighters, and one active or retired law enforcement officer representing law enforcement officers. Elections are held for fire fighter- and law enforcement officer-designated LEOFF 1 disability board positions. Only members of LEOFF 1 who are subject to the jurisdiction of a board are entitled to vote for board members, though LEOFF 2 members may serve on the board. In the event that there are no eligible law enforcement officers or no fire fighters to vote in a LEOFF 1 disability board election, then no representative of those members and retirees serve on the board, potentially reducing the total membership on the board to four.

**Summary of Bill:** If there are no fire fighters under the jurisdiction of a LEOFF 1 disability board of a city eligible to vote, a second eligible employee representative must be elected by the law enforcement officers eligible to vote.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Currently city disability boards have an election of one law enforcement and one firefighter. In Federal Way, there are no firefighters that come under the jurisdiction of this board. The firefighters in Federal Way are hired and employed by a fire district and are covered by the county disability board. This has occurred with county disability boards, but the county can then have two law enforcement officers elected to the board. This bill provides that on city disability boards that do not have eligible firefighters to vote for a member, two law enforcement officers may be elected to the board.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Dick Warbrook, Retired Firefighters of WA.